DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 356 HE 020 751

AUTHOR	Carpenter, Don A.
TITLE	Role and Mission Development: A Comparison of Different Approaches.
INSTITUTION	State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.
PUB DATE	87
NOTE	16p.; Prepared for the State Higher Education Executive Officers Task Force on Role and Mission.
AVAILABLE FROM	State Higher Education Executive Officers, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80295.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Planning; *College Role; Comparative Analysis; *Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; *Institutional Mission; *Mission Statements; Participative Decision Making; Prediction; Program Evaluation; State Action

ABSTRACT

A variety of approaches used by the states in preparing and utilizing institutional role and mission statements are examined. Purposes of delineating institutional missions are identified, along with components of role and mission statements. General statements of purpose and profiles of current programs and activities are provided in the mission statements, as well as a projection of selected activities and characteristics into the future. State comparisons concerning mission development are provided for Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Minnesota, Texas, and Utah. For each state, attention is directed to process and responsibility for mission development, uses/purposes of mission statements, and board/agency and institutional satisfaction with both the statements and the planning process. This information was obtained in early 1987 from State Higher Education Executives Officers staff members. It is concluded that in those states where involvement of board members and central staff, college leaders, and other parties has been in proper balance, the planning process itself has seemed valuable. When mission review and development are conducted primarily at the central board level, the results are likely to be less satisfactory and difficult to adhere to. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED287356

ROLE AND MISSION DEVELOPMENT:

A COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Don A. Carpenter
Associate Commissioner for Planning
Utah System of Higher Education

Prepared for the
State Higher Education Executive Officers
Task Force on Role and Mission

September 1987

State Higher Education Executive Officers
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 310
Denver, Colorado 80295

HE 020 751

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SHEEO

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ROLE AND MISSION DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Introduction

Well-defined institutional role and mission statements are vital for state higher education systems to provide both effective and efficient delivery of programs and services. System boards usually have the powers to approve or assign roles and mission to the various institutions under their jurisdiction.

For example, the Oregon system statute says that "the State Board of Higher Education may, for each institution, division and department under its control: supervise the general course of instruction therein and the research, extension, educational and other activities thereof."

The Utah Higher Education Act provides in part that the Board of Regents "shall establish and maintain an up-to-date master plan which shall include but not be limited to: (1) statewide planning of public higher education in terms of aims, purposes and objectives of the system as a whole; (2) establishing and defining the role and programs of each institution within the system; (3) establishing criteria for and determination of the future needs and requirements for new programs and new institutions and/or the elimination, curtailment or consolidation of existing programs and facilities. . . ."

The actual board powers for mission development differ only slightly among the states, usually centering on whether the board has statutory or constitutional authority. But the means employed for preparing role and mission statements, who actually writes them, how they are used and how satisfied boards and institutions are with their content and application, may vary significantly from state to state.

The purpose of this paper is to examine a variety of approaches used by the states in preparing and utilizing institutional role and mission statements.

Rationale for Mission Differentiation

The delineation of institutional missions is usually an important component of state higher education master plans. A review of such plans indicates that the primary reason for including role and mission statements is to clarify goals and purposes among institutions and in the public mind.

Mission clarification is thought to be necessary to assist: (1) potential students in their selection of an appropriate institution to attend; (2) board members, interested legislators and other policy makers by providing a starting point for considering new program requests or reviewing existing programs for possible deemphasis or elimination; and (3) administrators and faculty by establishing guidelines for assessing the quality and direction of programs and services in harmony with institutional goals.

The 1986 statewide plan in Maryland is typical and includes the following major purposes of mission specification:

1. To ensure that institutional activities correspond to the needs of the state and its citizens
2. To promote access and diversity by ensuring that a broad range of different types of educational opportunities is available to serve the wide variety of needs of the state's citizens and organizations
3. To enhance quality by providing priorities for institutional development and criteria for evaluating performance
4. To promote efficient use of resources by making institutional roles as complementary as possible and avoiding necessary duplication
5. To reinforce the state's commitment to equal educational opportunity

While all colleges and universities focus their efforts on the traditional purposes of teaching, research and public service, the basic mission of an institution determines the relative attention given to these goals. In establishing differentiated missions for a

state system, the governing board sets the bounds of emphasis for each campus among several institutions.

Mission differentiation is also frequently viewed as an important key to quality. Distinctive missions can direct resources to specific, important goals. Programs can be of higher quality because unwise and unnecessary duplication is avoided, allowing greater strength and expertise through specialization and resource consolidation.

Mission differentiation clarifies institutional programs and purposes in several important ways, as the 1986 state plan in North Dakota suggests. Institutional mission and role statements may differ according to:

- Degree levels
- Program comprehensiveness or specializations
- Student admission to institutions and/or specific degree programs
- Relative emphasis on research and public services

Components of Role and Mission Statements

According to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, there are three parts to an institutional mission statement — "a general narrative which includes a statement of purpose, a profile of present activities and characteristics and a projection of selected activities and characteristics into the future. . . ."

Caruthers and Lott (1981) suggest that mission statements should report "what the institution has been (its heritage), what it shall become (its destiny) and what it does not believe itself to be." They maintain that both permissive and restrictive elements — what an institution is and what it is not, for both internal and external groups — must be addressed if a mission statement is to be of greatest value for planning and budgeting purposes.

The experience of higher education leaders in a number of states indicates little difficulty or controversy in building institutional and board consensus around the first

two parts of the mission statement as described by the Virginia council. General statements of purpose and profiles of current programs and activities — what an institution is — can be readily monitored according to board policies and existing statutes, as well as the sheer political pressures of sister state institutions.

But the projection of an institution's activities and characteristics into the future — its destiny, what it will or will not be — can evoke heated argument, strong and vigorous disagreement and long, tedious debate among institutional leaders and their respective faculties and other constituents, local and regional political leaders and board members.

The reason? To the extent that an institutional mission statement addresses future programs and services, it focuses largely on faculty and community aspirations — on what institutional leaders and pressure groups want the college or university to become, as opposed to what it is or has been. And what one institution in a state system may become is perceived to have a direct bearing on what other institutions in that system also hope to become.

Davies (1986) cautions against institutional mission statements based primarily on aspiration as they are emotionally charged, politically shaped and highly debatable because they are not statements of fact. They also cannot be used effectively for planning and administration in higher education systems. Institutional aspirations are not verifiable, they are often not based in reality, and they cannot be used for resource allocation.

State agencies and boards, however, do encourage mission statements that address the future in terms of what an institution will not become. Clear statements of purpose that include what an institution does not view itself to be, and that limit institutional aspirations in harmony with a state's economic and environmental realities, can help state systems plan and budget.

Developing Role and Mission Statements

Because of inherent differences between the needs of academic institutions and their supporting communities and those of state agencies and boards, many different approaches toward mission development have evolved in the states. The state, with its interest in planning, may seek to control unwise duplication, preserve meaningful diversity among institutions and program offering and avoid "upward academic drift" and "homogenization" of the system that comes when all institutions attempt to mirror and ape the "flagship" research university.

An institution, however, may seek broad and permissive language in the mission statement that will allow it to respond positively to both desired and unanticipated opportunities. No college or university president can survive if he or she knowingly and willingly accepts a mission statement that tells faculty they cannot become more than they are.

But a state board cannot allow institutions to evolve to the point that the system as a whole is overbuilt and underfunded with respect to sta e resources and the types and levels of institutions needed to serve students with quality.

The result in most states is an ongoing search for compromise between central control and institutional autonomy — a constant quest for balance that retains the benefits of control sought by governors, legislators and state boards, while fostering the institutional initiatives and prerogatives necessary to sustain creativity and the essential dynamics of a healthy system of colleges and universities. Thus, mission and role statements are usually the product of long state traditions and institutional histories in which the colleges and universities, governing boards, legislatures and the various constituencies of higher education have achieved important compromises regarding the program directions and emphases provided at each campus.

State Comparisons Concerning Mission Development

SHEEO staff members in eight states were contacted during early 1987 to compare the process and responsibility for mission development among these states, to examine the purposes and uses of mission statements and to determine board/agency and institutional satisfaction with both the statements and the planning process.*

Alabama

Process and Responsibility. The institutions in Alabama were responsible for drafting their own mission statements as part of an ongoing, integrated planning and budgeting process. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education sponsored a workshop on writing mission statements and issued general instruction. Each institution then prepared a "statement of aspiration." Rather than challenging these statements, the agency drafted "de facto" mission statements for each institution based on statistical evidence of what it was actually doing.

Use/Purpose. Both kinds of mission statement are intended to signal "academic drift" and require specific budget approval of any new program activities that might cause a change in mission. The statements are viewed as an important dimension of integrated planning and budgeting process.

Satisfaction. Agency staff believe that significant progress has been made in mission development. Having both "aspiration" and "de facto" versions of mission statements seem to appeal to the institutions because their aspirations are not denied outright.

*Survey conducted during February and March 1987, in cooperation with J. Kent Caruthers, MGT of America, Tallahassee, Florida.

Arizona

Process and Responsibility. Each university in the Arizona system (which does not include state four-year or community colleges) was directed to develop its own mission statement. After a central staff critique, the statements were resubmitted. The central staff melded the statements into a single document, together with a discussion of several system-level issues.

Use/Purpose. The mission statements are used primarily by agency staff for reviewing new program proposals and requests to reorganize. At least one institution, however, Arizona State University, relies heavily on its mission statement for purposes of internal management.

Satisfaction. Board members feel that the statements are generally satisfactory. Staff members see the need for updating, however, saying the current versions need to be more comprehensive. Reactions from the institutions range from pleased to accepting.

Connecticut

Process and Responsibility. The Board of Governors for Higher Education (state coordinating agency) initiated the process by issuing guidelines and requesting the state systems to develop "system missions" and constituent units to develop "institutional role and scope statements." Instructions and formats, but no model statements, were provided with the guidelines. Board staff compiled "academic program inventories" and "institutional profiles" from approved program lists and annual reports. The systems then submitted governing board-approved statements. When the coordinating agency staff and board were unwilling to accept certain provisions in the mission statements, a prolonged period of negotiations followed.

Use Purpose. The overriding concern in Connecticut is for differentiation of institutions and higher education systems. This has been a particular concern in plans for

expansion — both geographic and in emerging areas of instruction such as engineering technology, where more than one institution believes it should have first claim on a new role.

Satisfaction. Thus far, only system mission statements have been approved, and they seem to be generally accepted. Institutional role and scope statements are being developed. Agency staff, with the benefit of hindsight, wish they had established a process for staff-level negotiations regarding system missions prior to board action.

Florida

Process and Responsibility. Individual sectors of Florida higher education (the university system, community college system, etc.) are responsible for developing mission statements in compliance with state statutes based on the Florida higher education master plan. The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) used a consultative process in developing the master plan several years ago, but PEPC has not been involved in system and institutional role and mission development since adoption of the plan. System boards do employ a consultative process in institutional mission development.

Use/Purpose. PEPC uses the mission statements in performing its statutory responsibility to review and comment on budget request. In fact, the main PEPC criterion is whether a proposed new budgetary time is consistent with the state master plan. Mission statements are also used to respond to new program request and proposals for branch campuses.

Satisfaction. Lay members of the Florida PEPC want more specific role and mission statements. Agency staff were initially satisfied with the statements as a first effort, but are reconsidering their position as the master plan is being updated. Institutional satisfaction with the mission statements has not been assessed.

Kansas

Process and Responsibility. Planning assumptions were written and issued by the central staff of the Kansas Board of Regents, after which the institutions were requested to develop and submit mission statements. Board members found these statements to be too wordy and general, and staff members were asked to rewrite and edit them. Agency staff then worked closely with institutional staff to test their revised products with key board members before submitting them to the board.

Use/Purpose. The original intent of mission development was to achieve greater differentiation among the institutions. The schools now use these statements to defend their actions and proposals. Kansas State University, for example, relied heavily on its new mission statement in a highly publicized strategic planning activity.

Satisfaction. The Kansas regents are somewhat at ease with the revised institutional mission statements, especially now that the media have endorsed the effort as being productive. The board's staff members are satisfied with the product as a beginning effort. The institutions, however, have mixed reactions — Kansas State University is pleased, but some of the other institutions feel fenced in.

Minnesota

Process and Responsibility. The Minnesota Legislature, with encouragement from the coordinating board, required higher education systems in the state to participate in the process of mission development. Initially, several system-based committees were involved. Chiefs identified issues and set instructions and format, while lieutenants conducted policy analysis. The system executives then drew up planning principles, which became the most substantive decisions of the entire process. After the board agreed to these principles, mission documents were developed by each system.

Use/Purpose. The mission activity had its genesis in an admissions policy study that sought greater differentiation among systems and institutions. The systems agreed

to work together on mission review as a less threatening alternative than a new master plan or the creation of a state higher education superboard. The mission statements are to be placed in statute.

Satisfaction. Legislators like the process and trust that something useful was accomplished. Agency staff deem the mission documents to be weak, but they are more satisfied with the impact of the process on other planning activities. Institutional leaders are happy that more threatening alternatives were avoided.

Texas

Process and Responsibility. Central staff of the College and University Coordinating Board began a mission development activity several years ago. Representatives from a number of states active in reviewing missions were invited to a planning retreat, which was also attended by a large Texas interinstitutional advisory committee. The process involved significant interaction between staff of the coordinating board and the institutions and between staff of the coordinating board and system governing boards. The result is a four-part document containing a narrative mission statement, a statement on institutional history and structure, a statement of institutional ambitions and aspirations and a "table of programs." The programs table contains a matrix that shows for each institution which programs are currently offered (Classification of Instructional Program [CIP] codes by degree levels) and whether authorization is isolated to that particular program or is more permissive (i.e. would the coordinating board consider new program proposals in the CIP area to fall automatically within the mission.)

Use/Purpose. Two primary reasons were cited for the mission development activity. First, the agency was charged with defining institutional missions when it was created several years earlier, and the task needed to be completed in advance of a sunset review being faced by the board. The second objective was to enable the board to

contain the expansion of certain institutions to aid in systemwide program planning.

Satisfaction. The coordinating board and staff are quite pleased with the results. However, only 24 of 36 institutions have completed mission statements. Indications are that institutions completing the task are the ones to work with on this particular issue.

Utah

Process and Responsibility. Staff of the State Board of Regents drafted the initial institutional role and mission statements in conjunction with board efforts to prepare a new higher education master plan. The statements were reviewed by chief academic officers and submitted to the institutions, key legislators and other advisory groups for review and comment. Following preliminary board approval, the new master plan, including revised statements, was discussed in public hearings across the state. Mission statements became the focus of controversy in some campus communities where supporters felt institutional aspirations were being unnecessarily limited.

Use/Purpose. The mission statements are viewed as expressions of basic purposes of the institutions and are used to guard against unwise "academic drift" during a period of rapid enrollment growth that might otherwise lead to a system that is overbuilt and underfunded. Statements are prefaced in the master plan by a moratorium on proposed programs that would expand institutional missions, until existing quality deficits are corrected and issues of access and quality reconciled. The statements are also intended to preserve diversity among institutions, to aid program approval and review processes and to help manage enrollments and promote quality.

Satisfaction. While a board moratorium on mission expansion remains intact in the new Utah master plan, preclusions describing what the institutions would not become were deleted in the final statements. Moreover, within the framework of general mission statements adopted in the master plan, subject to board review, institutions are free to prepare and publish more specialized statements of role and purpose that highlight

distinguishing features of their programs, offerings and areas of focus. They seem pleased to have positive and descriptive statements of role and mission, and the board and staff are happy that the original intent of including important mission limitations and preclusions remains firm in board policy adopted through the new master plan.

The Consultative Process

With increased system-level leadership and activity in long-range and strategic planning, including the review and development of system and institutional missions, it becomes apparent that the process used is critical for achieving meaningful results and lasting satisfaction. In fact, in those states where involvement of board members and central staff, institutional leaders and other interested parties has been in proper balance, the planning process itself has seemed as valuable and rewarding as the products.

When mission review and development activities are conducted primarily at the central board level, with little opportunity for comment and involvement of institutions directly affected, the results are likely to be less than satisfactory and difficult to adhere to. This occurs even if the product is rational and sound because the institutions and their supporting communities lack ownership or commitment to their new missions. On the other hand, institutionally designed missions developed with little awareness and concern of system-level needs and the broader state environment for higher education will be be effective or last long. The ideal seems to be a shared approach to decision making that allows local perspectives to be heard and examined in the context of overarching state needs and priorities.

What persists, then, for state boards and system-level planners is a continuing and complex challenge of adjustment — the patient search for compromise between centralized and decentralized authority leading to a fine power equilibrium that may really only exist in theory. In the meantime, while that equilibrium is being sought,

clearly the most effective and lasting attempts to review, revise and develop system and institutional role and mission statements appear to come from determined joint efforts of both system/board staff and the institutions.

REFERENCES

Advisory Panel on the Future of Higher Education in North Dakota. **Partners for Quality: Preparing Higher Education for a Second Century of Change.** Bismarck, North Dakota: Board of Higher Education, 1986.

Caruthers, J. Kent, and Lott, Gary B. **Mission Review: Foundation for Strategic Planning.** Boulder, Colorado: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1981.

Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education. **Guidelines for the Development of Constituent Unit Mission Statements and Institutional/Branch Campus Role and Scope Statements.** Hartford, Connecticut: Board of Governors for Higher Education, 1984.

Davies, Gordon K. "The Importance of Being General: Philosophy, Politics and Institutional Mission Statements," **Higher Education: Handbook on Theory and Research, Vol. II.** New York: Agathon Press, 1986.

Maryland State Board for Higher Education. **Maryland Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education.** Annapolis, Maryland: Maryland State Board for Higher Education, 1986.

McGuinness, Aims C. Jr. "The Search for More Effective State Policy Leadership in Higher Education," **Grapevine.** Normal, Illinois: Illinois State University, April 1986.

Oregon State System of Higher Education. **A Strategic Plan for the Oregon State System of Higher Education, 1983-87.** Salem, Oregon: Oregon State System of Higher Education, 1983.

Utah State Board of Regents. **Utah Higher Education Master Plan.** Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State Board of Regents, 1987.

Virginia State Council of Higher Education. **The Virginia Plan for Higher Education.** Richmond, Virginia: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1985.